

DECISION MEMORANDUM

Black Mountains Bighorn Sheep Capture 2015 (DOI-BLM-AZ-C010-2015-0052-DNA)

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Kingman Field Office
2755 Mission Blvd.
Kingman, AZ 86401

Approval and Decision

Based on a review of the project described in the attached DNA documentation and Kingman Field Office staff recommendations, I have determined that the project is in conformance with the Kingman Field Office Resource Management Plan (approved March 1995) and that the analysis contained in the existing environmental assessments *Programmatic Environmental Assessment for the Reintroduction and Supplemental Releases of Desert Bighorn Sheep in Mohave, Yavapai, Coconino, and La Paz counties, Environmental Assessment No. AZ-030-2001-0035*; and *Black Mountain Ecosystem Management Plan and Environmental Assessment No. AZ-025-95-032* is adequate. It is my decision to approve this action as proposed with the attached stipulations/mitigation measures. The proposed project is to capture up to 40 desert bighorn sheep in the Black Mountains, south and north of Route 66, in Game Management Unit (GMU) 15D and relocate within Arizona. Capture and translocation of the desert bighorn sheep would take place in November 2015, with estimated dates of November 3-6, 2015.

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

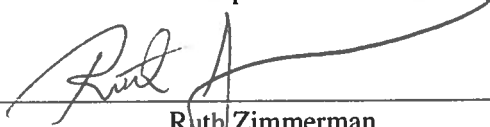
This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR, Part 4 and the attached Form 1842-1. If an appeal is made, your notice of appeal must be filed at the BLM Kingman Field Office, 2755 Mission Blvd., AZ 86401, within 30 days from receipt of this decision. The appellant has the burden of showing how they are harmed and how the decision appealed from is in error.

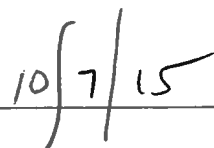
If you wish to file a petition (pursuant to regulation 43 CFR 4.21 (58 FR 4939, January 19, 1993)) (request) for a stay (suspension) of this decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Board, the petition for a stay must accompany your notice of appeal. A petition for a stay is required to show sufficient justification based on the standards listed below. Copies of the notice of appeal and petition for a stay must also be submitted to each party named in this decision and to the Interior Board of Land Appeals and to the Office of the Solicitor (Department of the Interior, Office of the Field Solicitor, Sandra Day O'Connor U.S. Court House #404, 401 West Washington Street SPC44, Phoenix, AZ 85003-2151) (see 43 CFR 4.413) at the same time the original documents are filed with this office. If you request a stay, you have the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted.

Except as otherwise provided by law or other pertinent regulation, a petition for a stay of a decision pending appeal shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

Standards for Obtaining a Stay

1. The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied,
2. The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits,
3. The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and
4. Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.


Ruth Zimmerman
Acting Field Manager, Kingman Field Office


Date

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

INFORMATION ON TAKING APPEALS TO THE INTERIOR BOARD OF LAND
APPEALS

DO NOT APPEAL UNLESS

1. This decision is adverse to you
- AND
2. You believe it is incorrect

IF YOU APPEAL, THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES MUST BE FOLLOWED

1. NOTICE OF APPEAL.....

A person who wishes to appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals must file in the office of the officer who made the decision (not the Interior Board of Land Appeals) a notice that he wishes to appeal. A person served with the decision being appealed must transmit the *Notice of Appeal* in time for it to be filed in the office where it is required to be filed within 30 days after the date of service. If a decision is published in the FEDERAL REGISTER, a person not served with the decision must transmit a *Notice of Appeal* in time for it to be filed within 30 days after the date of publication (43 CFR 4.411 and 4.413).

2. WHERE TO FILE-

NOTICE OF APPEAL, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, KINGMAN FIELD OFFICE,
2755 MISSION BOULEVARD, KINGMAN, AZ 86401, WITH COPY TO
FIELD SOLICITOR, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR U.S. COURTHOUSE,
SOLICITOR, SUITE 404, 401 WEST WASHINGTON STREET, SPC 44, PHOENIX, AZ 85003-2151

3. STATEMENT OF REASONS-

Within 30 days after filing the *Notice of Appeal*, file a complete statement of the reasons why you are appealing. This must be filed with the United States Department of the Interior, Office of Hearings and Appeals, Interior Board of Land Appeals, 801 N. Quincy Street, MS 300-QC, Arlington, Virginia 22203. If you fully stated your reasons for appealing when filing the *Notice of Appeal*, no additional statement is necessary (43 CFR 4.412 and 4.413).

WITH COPY TO: FIELD SOLICITOR, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR U.S. COURTHOUSE, SOLICITOR, SUITE 404, 401 WEST WASHINGTON STREET, SPC 44, PHOENIX, AZ 85003-2151

4. ADVERSE PARTIES.....

Within 15 days after each document is filed, each adverse party named in the decision and the Regional Solicitor or Field Solicitor having jurisdiction over the State in which the appeal arose must be served with a copy of: (a) the *Notice of Appeal*, (b) the Statement of Reasons, and (c) any other documents filed (43 CFR 4.413).

5. PROOF OF SERVICE.....

Within 15 days after any document is served on an adverse party, file proof of that service with the United States Department of the Interior, Office of Hearings and Appeals, Interior Board of Land Appeals, 801 N. Quincy Street, MS 300-QC, Arlington, Virginia 22203. This may consist of a certified or registered mail "Return Receipt Card" signed by the adverse party (43 CFR 4.401(c)).

6. REQUEST FOR STAY.....

Except where program-specific regulations place this decision in full force and effect or provide for an automatic stay, the decision becomes effective upon the expiration of the time allowed for filing an appeal unless a petition for a stay is timely filed together with a *Notice of Appeal* (43 CFR 4.21). If you wish to file a petition for a stay of the effectiveness of this decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Interior Board of Land Appeals, the petition for a stay must accompany your *Notice of Appeal* (43 CFR 4.21 or 43 CFR 2801.10 or 43 CFR 2881.10). A petition for a stay is required to show sufficient justification based on the standards listed below. Copies of the *Notice of Appeal* and Petition for a Stay must also be submitted to each party named in this decision and to the Interior Board of Land Appeals and to the appropriate Office of the Solicitor (43 CFR 4.413) at the same time the original documents are filed with this office. If you request a stay, you have the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted.

Standards for Obtaining a Stay. Except as otherwise provided by law or other pertinent regulations, a petition for a stay of a decision pending appeal shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards: (1) the relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied, (2) the likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits, (3) the likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and (4) whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

Unless these procedures are followed, your appeal will be subject to dismissal (43 CFR 4.402). Be certain that all communications are identified by serial number of the case being appealed.

NOTE: A document is not filed until it is actually received in the proper office (43 CFR 4.401 (a)). See 43 CFR Part 4, Subpart B for general rules relating to procedures and practice involving appeals.

(Continued on the following page)

43 CFR SUBPART 1821-GENERAL INFORMATION

Sec. 1821.10 Where are BLM offices located? (a) In addition to the Headquarters Office in Washington, D.C. and seven national level support and service centers, BLM operates 12 State Offices each having several subsidiary offices called Field Offices. The addresses of the State Offices can be found in the most recent edition of 43 CFR 1821.10. The State Office geographical areas of jurisdiction are as follows:

STATE OFFICES AND AREAS OF JURISDICTION:

Alaska State Office ----- Alaska
Arizona State Office ----- Arizona
California State Office ----- California
Colorado State Office ----- Colorado
Eastern States Office ----- Arkansas, Iowa, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri
and, all States east of the Mississippi River
Idaho State Office ----- Idaho
Montana State Office ----- Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota
Nevada State Office ----- Nevada
New Mexico State Office ---- New Mexico, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas
Oregon State Office ----- Oregon and Washington
Utah State Office ----- Utah
Wyoming State Office ----- Wyoming and Nebraska

(b) A list of the names, addresses, and geographical areas of jurisdiction of all Field Offices of the Bureau of Land Management can be obtained at the above addresses or any office of the Bureau of Land Management, including the Washington Office, Bureau of Land Management, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20240.

(Form 1842-1, September 2006)

Attachment 1

Stipulations

1. Actions which result in impacts to archaeological or historical resources shall be subject to the provisions of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 as amended (ARPA) and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. These statutes protect cultural resources for the benefit of all Americans. No person may excavate, remove, damage, or otherwise alter or deface any historic or prehistoric site, artifact or object of antiquity located on public lands without authorization. Damaging cultural resources more than 100 years of age is a punishable act under ARPA. Criminal and/or civil penalties may result if damage to archaeological resources is documented, as provided under ARPA and its implementing regulations at 43 CFR 7.
2. The holder shall immediately bring to the attention of the Kingman Field Manager (or designated representative) any cultural resources (prehistoric/historic sites or objects) and/or paleontological resources (fossils) encountered during permitted operations and maintain the integrity of such resources pending subsequent investigation. All permitted operations within 30 meters (100 feet) of the cultural resources shall cease until written authorization to proceed is received from the Authorized Officer.
3. Contractors shall receive a copy of the tortoise handling guidelines (attached) and distribute to all workers the day of the project and advise on handling procedures.
4. In the event hazardous materials are encountered during any activities associated with this, all activity would cease with the hazardous material and a BLM Law Enforcement Ranger would be contacted immediately.

Attachment 2

United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Kingman Field Office
2755 Mission Boulevard
Kingman, Arizona 86401
www.az.blm.gov



GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING DESERT TORTOISE ENCOUNTERED ON ROADS AND VEHICLE WAYS

1. Stop your vehicle and allow the tortoise to move off the road.
2. If the tortoise is not moving, gently** pick up the tortoise and move it approximately 200 feet off the road to a shaded location.
 - a. Do **not** turn the tortoise over.
 - b. Move the tortoise in the direction it was traveling. If it was crossing the road, move it in the direction it was crossing.
 - c. Keep the tortoise within 12-18 inches of the ground, move slowly so as not to cause it to become alarmed.
 - d. Release the tortoise under the shade of a bush or rock.

** Tortoise store water in their bladder. If a tortoise becomes alarmed its defense is to void its bladder onto the captor. This could lead to dehydration of the tortoise and potentially to death.



KINGMAN FIELD OFFICE SCOPING FORM

DOI-BLM-AZ-C010-2015-0052 -DNA

S:/BLMshare/NEPA/EAEIS/Wildlife/Bighorn Capture and Release 2012-2017/2015 Bighorn Capture

NEPA Document Number

RMP Implementation No.

Document Location

Black Mountain Bighorn Sheep Capture

Land Description: Black Mountains, south and north of Route 66, in Game Management Unit (GMU) 15D.

Applicant: Arizona Game and Fish Department

INVOLVEMENT: Indicate in the left column which disciplines need to provide information into the EA.

Needed Input (X)	Discipline	Signature
	Lands	
	Minerals	
X	Range	Rebecca L. Park 9/25/15
X	Wild Horse and Burro	9/25/15
	General Recreation	
X	Cultural and Paleontological Resources <i>See Item 1 of NEPA Adequacy Criteria in the DNA</i>	for archeology Rebecca L. Park 10-6-2015
X	Wilderness	Walter W. W. 9/25/15
	Soils	
	Surface and Groundwater Quality/Water Rights	
	Air Quality	
X	Wildlife	Rebecca L. Park 9/25/15
X	Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals	Rebecca L. Park 9/25/15
X	Migratory Birds	Rebecca L. Park 9/25/15
	Surface Protection	
	Hazardous Materials	
X	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	Rebecca L. Park 9/25/15
	Visual Resources	
	Socio-Economics/Environmental Justice	
	General Botany/Noxious Weeds	
	Energy Policy	

Writer: Rebecca L. Park

Date: 8/17/2015

Environmental Coordinator: Jeff Edwards

Date: 9/9/2015

Field Manager: Don E. Chen

Date: 8/17/15

OFFICE: Kingman Field Office (KFO), AZ-310

NEPA DOCUMENT NUMBER: DOI-BLM-AZ-C010-2015-0052-DNA

PROPOSED ACTION TITLE/TYPE: Black Mountains Bighorn Sheep Capture 2015.

LOCATION/LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Capture Area: Black Mountains, Mohave County, Arizona, Game Management Unit (GMU) 15D

APPLICATION (if any): Arizona Game and Fish Department, Region III

A. Description of the Proposed Action and any applicable mitigation measures:

The proposed project is to capture desert bighorn sheep in the Black Mountains, south and north of Route 66, in Game Management Unit (GMU) 15D and relocate within Arizona. Capture and translocation of the desert bighorn sheep would take place in November 2015, with estimated dates of November 3-6, 2015.

Capture: The proposed project would involve the capture of up to 40 bighorn sheep. The desired transplant ratio is one ram per three ewes or, 10 rams and 30 ewes. Only class I and II rams would be removed for transplant. If possible, all 40 sheep will be moved at one time; however it may be done in two different releases.

The capture operation would take 2-5 days to complete, assuming no weather or logistical delays occur. The fall time frame would provide suitable conditions for a successful capture as air temperatures are low, bighorn sheep are not in late stages of pregnancy and lambs are no longer dependent on ewes.

The net-gun method would be used to capture bighorn sheep. The net-gun method involves using a gun to shoot a net at bighorn sheep during low-level helicopter overflights. This may be done with the assistance of spotters located on the ground. Once captured the helicopter would land, or, capture personnel would exit the aircraft while it is hovering. The capture animals would immediately be blindfolded, hobbled and if possible, the capture net would be removed. The bighorn sheep would be transplanted by helicopter, either carried inside or slung underneath, from the capture location to the capture staging area. At the staging areas the bighorn sheep would be processed. Each bighorn sheep would receive an ear tag, a blood and genetic sample may be taken. All bighorn sheep would be loaded into the transport boxes. Captures would be conducted by the AGFD and volunteers. Capture operations would be scheduled to occur during weekdays, however there is potential that capture during a weekend day may occur due to weather or scheduling problems.

The bighorn sheep would be captured in GMU 15D (Map 1) which is comprised of non-wilderness and wilderness public lands. Approximately 70% of the capture area is within the Mount Nutt and Warm Springs wildernesses. Whenever possible capture would occur outside of the wilderness and landing in wilderness would be avoided when possible. Depending upon where individual bighorn sheep are net-gunned, there may be as few as 25 landings of the helicopter, or as many as 40 landings within the wilderness. All other landings will take place outside of wilderness. The capture areas include BLM, Arizona State Trust land and private land however capture operations would not occur or affect any private land. If needed the helicopter may land on Arizona State Trust land.

Release: The release locations have not yet been determined however, bighorn sheep would be released *outside* of the Kingman Field Office, but within Arizona, at already approved release locations. The most likely release area is at Kanab Creek, on the BLM Arizona Strip District. The second location would be on National Park Lands in the Lake Mead National Recreation Area.

Staging and Camping: There may be up to three staging areas needed for the capture area (Map 2) however it is likely that only one staging area would be needed. Up to 30 people (agency and volunteers) may be present at each staging area. At the capture staging areas, dry camping would occur for up to 3 nights. Anywhere from 10-15 people may camp at one of the staging areas as local people would go to their homes for the evening. Camping and staging areas have been selected in areas that are already disturbed, along dirt or maintained roads, or within washes. The staging areas would be left free of trash.

Notifications: The livestock grazing permittees for Black Mountain, Boriana B, and Happy Jack Wash allotments would be notified of the capture dates.

B. Land Use Plan (LUP) Conformance

LUP Name: *Kingman Resource Management Plan/EIS*
Date Approved: March 1995

The proposed action is in conformance with the LUP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decisions (objectives, terms, and conditions):

Remarks: RMP Decision number and narrative:

SM*02/II Special Management- Manage the twelve "Areas of Critical Environmental Concern" designation according to the goals and objectives in the RMP pages 95 to 111. Evaluate land use authorizations, including all the existing activity plans, for compatibility with goals and objectives of the area of critical environmental concern.

WL*01/VIB Wildlife- Continue implementation and revision of the Habitat Management Plans in coordination and cooperation with the state wildlife agency and interested publics (page 79, Objectives and Planned Actions section).

BM*21/VIC Black Mountain ACEC- Promote opportunities for scientific research of ecological and cultural resources (page 99, Objectives section).

BM12/I Black Mountain ACEC- Maintain balanced resource development while providing for public demand and sensitive resource needs. Protect and enhance special status species habitat. Protect cultural resources. Manage wilderness to maintain wilderness values and characteristics (page 99, Goals).

BM15/I Black Mountain ACEC- Improve and maintain habitat while providing for the needs of wild burros, desert bighorn sheep, and other wildlife species and livestock (page 99, Objectives).

* SM = Special Management Areas; WL = Wildlife; BM = Black Mountain

B. Identify applicable National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents and other related documents that cover the proposed action.

Black Mountain Ecosystem Management Plan and Environmental Assessment (AZ-025-95-032), 1996 (BME Plan)

-pg. 36 #4, BME Plan: Initiate coordination with agencies and individuals that are responsible for management of land adjacent to the Black Mountain ecosystem to delineate and designate movement corridors between the Black Mountain and other ecosystems.

-pg. 49 #4, BME Plan: Discusses procedures for wildlife population and capture of wildlife in wilderness. Capture may occur as often as every year. Two methods may be used: net-gun, and remote chemical injection. Methods described in Appendix 4 (Capture methodologies for Bighorn Sheep) pg. 102 BME Plan.

-pg. 102, Appendix 4, BME Plan: Capture sites: discussed: wherever bighorn occur, inside or outside of wilderness.

Programmatic Environmental Assessment for the Reintroduction and Supplemental Releases of Desert Bighorn Sheep in Mohave, Yavapai, Coconino, and La Paz counties. Environmental Assessment (AZ-030-2001-0035). BLM Kingman Field Office, Arizona: This document analyzes capture and release of bighorn sheep within the Kingman Field Office, BLM.

Transplant of desert bighorn sheep into the Artillery Mountains, 1994. Environmental Assessment (AZ-025-94-057). BLM Kingman Field Office, Arizona: This document analyzes capture and release of bighorn sheep within the Kingman Field Office, BLM.

C. NEPA Adequacy Criteria

1. Is the new proposed action a feature of, or essentially similar to, an alternative analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? Is the project within the same analysis area, or if the project location is different, are the geographic and resource conditions sufficiently similar to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? If there are differences, can you explain why they are not substantial?

Documentation of answer and explanation:

The proposed action is the same as analyzed in *Programmatic Environmental Assessment for the Reintroduction and Supplemental Releases of Desert Bighorn Sheep in Mohave, Yavapai, Coconino, and La Paz counties. Environmental Assessment (AZ-030-2001-0035)* however the number of bighorn sheep captured in the new proposal (up to 40 bighorn sheep) would be smaller (up to 70) than proposed in the existing NEPA document. This results in fewer hours of flight and landings. A clearance from Tim Watkins, Archeologist for the staging areas on public land was completed in the previous DNAs.

2. Is the range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s) appropriate with respect to the new proposed action, given current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values?

Documentation of answer and explanation: Yes, the range of alternatives remains the same given current environmental concerns, interests and resource values.

1.) Capturing animals outside and inside of wilderness, and 2.) Capturing animals outside of wilderness only, and 3.) The No Action alternative. The current environmental concerns, interests and resource values are unchanged from 1994.

3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances (such as, rangeland health standard assessment, recent endangered species listings, updated lists of BLM-sensitive species)? Can you reasonably conclude that new information and new circumstances would not substantially change the analysis of the new proposed action?

Documentation of answer and explanation: There are no new circumstances or informant that would change the analysis of the proposed action (MRDG, 2013). There would be no affect to Threatened or Endangered Species or to Critical Habitat as none is found in the project area.

4. Are the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects that would result from implementation of the new proposed action similar (both quantitatively and qualitatively) to those analyzed in the exiting NEPA document?

Documentation of answer and explanation: Yes, bighorn sheep would still be affected by capture and release. There would still be the direct effects of capture and release and indirect effects from wearing the collars. Data from the collars would be used to determine movements, movement areas, habitat use, and mortality events (the collars give off a mortality signal). Part of the capture area is within the Black Mountain Ecosystem Management Area of Critical Environmental Concerns. The Black mountain Ecosystem Management Plan evaluated the impacts of bighorn capture. Impacts are essentially similar or would be the same. Wilderness values of naturalness and opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation would still be temporarily impacted by the use of aircraft during the capture. The original proposal evaluated impacts for up to 50 helicopter landings. This proposal would have as few as 25 landings and as many as 40 landings, thus fewer landings.

5. Are the public involvement and interagency review associate with existing NEPA documents adequate for the current proposed action?

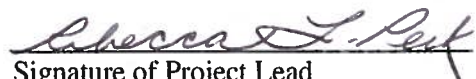
Documentation of answer and explanation: Yes, the original NEPA document was sent out to over 500 individuals and groups which represented those concerned with wilderness impacts, wildlife impacts, and grazing management impacts. There have been no issues or complaints from the individuals or groups following implementation of the original proposed action as well as following subsequent captures that have occurred in years 1995, 1999, 2002, 2004, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, and 2014.

E. Persons/Agencies/BLM Staff Consulted


<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Resource/Agency Represented</u>
Victoria Anne	Planning and Environmental Coordinator	Bureau of Land Management
Chad Benson	Wild Horse and Burro Specialist	Bureau of Land Management
Mike Blanton	Range Specialist	Bureau of Land Management
Erin Butler	Game Specialist	Arizona Game and Fish Dept
Matt Driscoll	Outdoor Recreation Planner, Wilderness	Bureau of Land Management
Rebecca Peck	Wildlife Biologist	Bureau of Land Management

Conclusion


Based on the review documented above, I conclude that this proposal conforms to the applicable land use plan and that the NEPA documentation fully covers the proposed action and constitute BLM's compliance with the requirement of the NEPA.


Signature of Project Lead
Rebecca Peck, Wildlife Biologist

10-6-2015
Date


Signature of NEPA Coordinator
Victoria Anne

10-6-2015
Date


Signature of Responsible BLM Official
Ruth Zimmerman, Acting Field Manager
Kingman Field Office

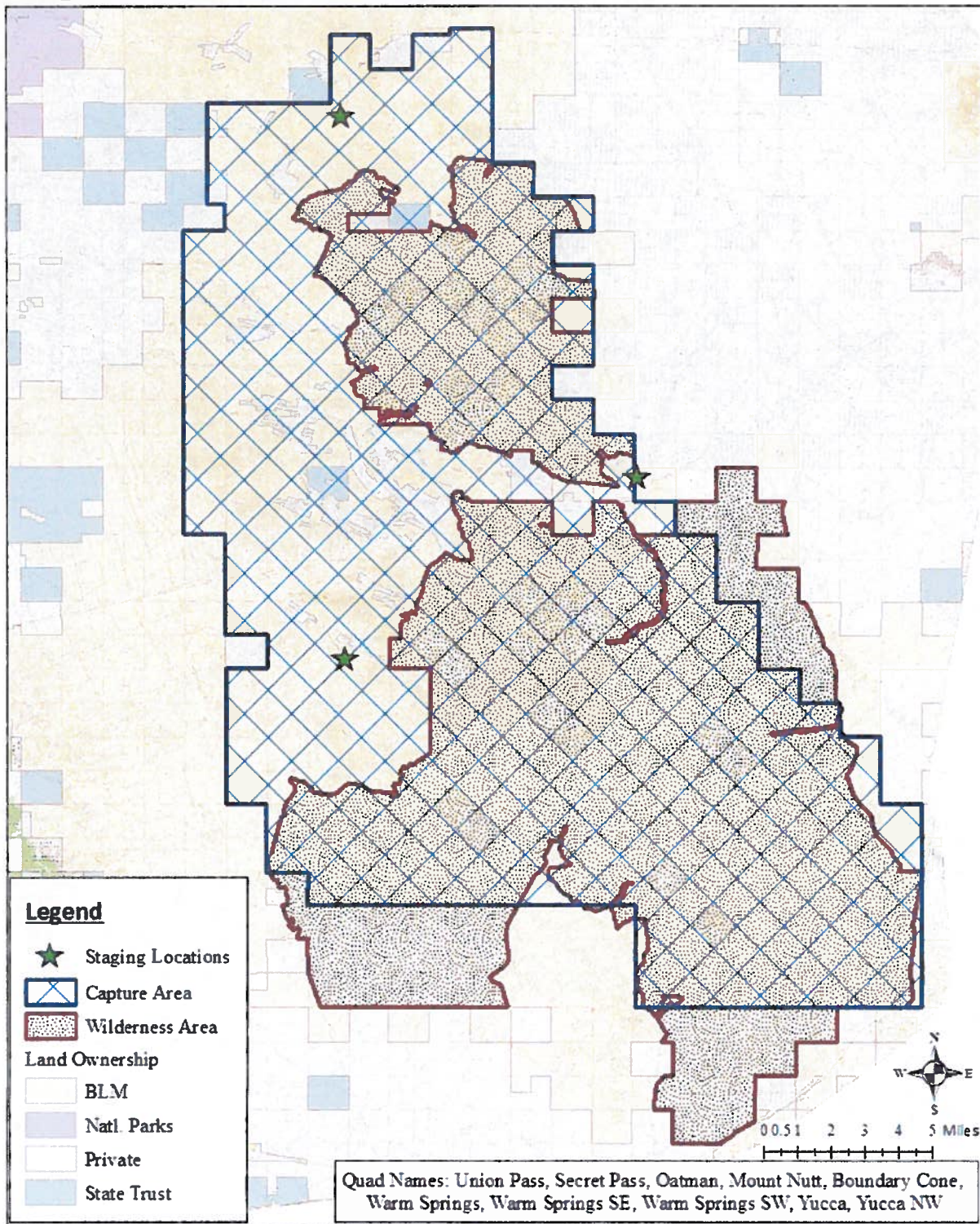
10-7-15
Date

References

Peck, Rebecca 2009. Biological Evaluation of Federally Listed Species, State Listed Species, and Migratory Birds. Bureau of Land Management, Kingman Field Office, Arizona.

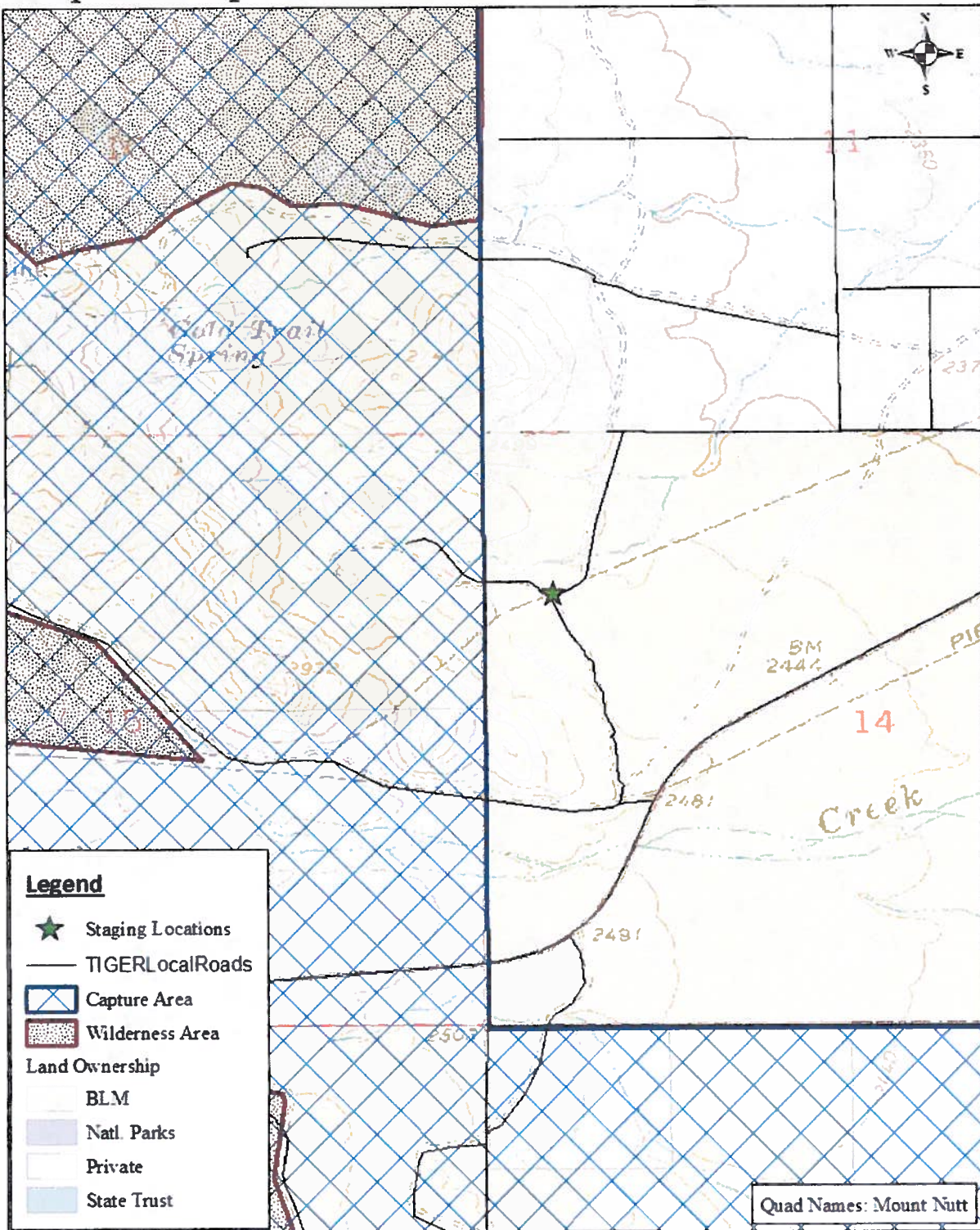
Bureau of Land Management 2013. Minimum Requirements Decision Guide for the Black Mountain and Poachie Mountains Bighorn Capture and Release. Bureau of Land Management, Kingman, Arizona.

Map #1: Black Mountains Bighorn Sheep Capture Area



Map 1. Proposed capture areas for the 2014 bighorn sheep capture in the Black Mountains, AZ.

Map #2: Proposed Black Mountains Capture Location



Map 2. Proposed capture staging/camping area for the 2015 in the Black Mountains, AZ.

PROJECT COORDINATION

Minutes

1:45

08-17-2015

Facilitator: Matt Driscoll

Recorder: Rebecca Peck

Timekeeper: Buzz Todd

Agenda Items: Brief description, legal description, general location, name of presenter, time needed.

Rules: 90 minute meetings

No side conversations

Stick to time limits

Additional agenda items added at end of meeting if time permits

PAST DUE CLEARANCES (If applicable): None

DECISION RECORDS TO BE DISCUSSED: None

PROJECTS:

1. Proposed Black Tank Corral.

Cedar Canyon Allot: A water lot of 120'x120', constructed out of railroad ties, with barbwire, staves, and metal swinging gates. There would be three (3) sorting pens 20'x20' on the back portion, made out of panels, with steel posts anchored in the ground, and metal swinging gates. There is an existing permit for the tanks and trough. The pens would be within the disturbed area, within the permitted area. They are also proposing to install a wildlife water, with appropriate escape ramp on the outside of the water lot. The wildlife water would be fenced from livestock using pipe-rail fence. Do we need a cultural clearance? We will check to see if one was done. If not, one will be completed. Is it a Co-op or a Range Improvement Permit. We will need an amendment to the permit. What is recommended for NEPA? Wildlife and T&E: R. Peck, Archaeology: to be determined.

Range Improvement permit includes well, tank, trough and pipeline. (McClure 10 minutes)

2. NEPA Templates Discussion - VAnne

3. Bat Acoustic Project – Proponent: NAU student Clarissa Starbuck (R. Peck 10 min)

Project Objective: Developing a risk assessment for future wind energy development

Bat activity data would be collected to develop a model of probability of bat by season. A map of bat occupancy in northern Arizona would be created for areas considered suitable for wind development areas. This project would be part of a larger research effort in which over 100 locations across northern Arizona would be monitored each season for three years.

The probability of occupancy for all bats and for individual species (particularly migratory species and species of concern) would be determined. The probability of bat occupancy by fitting occupancy models for bats in northern Arizona and also specific bat species in northern Arizona would also be

What type of NEPA is recommended? Cx is recommend. Wildlife and T&E: R. Peck, Archaeology: probably not necessary as no off-road travel.

4. Black Mountain Bighorn Sheep Capture (R. Peck & Pebworth & Butler 15 min.)

The proposed project is to capture desert bighorn sheep in the Black Mountains, south and north of Route 66, in Game Management Unit (GMU) 15D and relocate within Arizona. Capture and translocation of the desert bighorn sheep would take place in November 2015, with estimated dates of November 3-6, 2015.

Capture: The proposed project would involve the capture of at least 40 bighorn sheep. If possible, all 40 sheep would be moved at one time; however it may be done in two different releases.

The capture operation would take *2-5 days* to complete, assuming no weather or logistical delays occur. The fall time frame would provide suitable conditions for a successful capture as air temperatures are low, bighorn sheep are not in late stages of pregnancy and lambs are no longer dependent on ewes.

The *net-gun method* would be used to capture bighorn sheep. The net-gun method involves using a gun to shoot a net at bighorn during low-level helicopter overflights. This may be done with the assistance of spotters located on the ground. Once captured the helicopter would land, or, capture personnel would exit the aircraft while it is hovering. The capture animals would immediately be blindfolded, hobbled and if possible, the capture net would be removed. The bighorn would be transplanted by helicopter, either carried inside or slung underneath, from the capture location to the capture staging area. At the staging areas the bighorn would be processed. Each bighorn would receive an ear tag, a blood and genetic sample may be taken. If available up to ten bighorn would receive a tan-colored GPS or VHF collar. All bighorn would be loaded into the transport boxes. Captures would be conducted by the AGFD and volunteers. Capture operations would be scheduled to occur during *weekend*, however there is *potential* that capture during a *week day* may occur due to weather or scheduling problems.

The bighorn would be capture in GMU 15D (Map 1) which is comprised of non-wilderness and wilderness public lands. Approximately 70% of the capture area is within the Mount Nutt and Warm Springs wildernesses. Whenever possible capture would occur outside of the wilderness and landing in wilderness would be avoided when possible. Depending upon where individual bighorn are net-gunned, there may be as few as 25 landings of the helicopter, or as many as 40 landings within the wilderness. All other landings would take place outside of wilderness. The capture areas include BLM, Arizona State Trust land and private land however capture operations would not occur or affect any private land. If needed the helicopter may land on Arizona State Trust land.

Release: Bighorn would be released within Arizona at approved locations for desert bighorn sheep. Potential locations are on NPS lands near Meadview or at Kanab Creek on the Arizona Strip.

Staging and Camping: There may be up to three staging areas needed for the capture area (Map 23) however it is likely that only one staging area would be needed. Up to 30 people (agency and volunteers) may be present at each staging area. At the capture staging areas, dry camping would occur for up to 3 nights. Anywhere from 10-15 people may camp at one of the staging areas as local people would go to their homes for the evening. Camping and staging areas have been selected in

areas that are already disturbed, along dirt or maintained roads, or within washes. The staging areas would be left free of trash.

Notifications: The livestock grazing permittees for Black Mountain, Boriana B, and Happy Jack Wash allotments would be notified of the capture and release dates.

NEPA recommendation: DNA

5. Ram Spring Wildlife Water – AGFD No. 797 Ram Spring – Fence addition (Peck & Pebworth 10 min)

T. 21N, R. 19W, sec. 31, SESWNE. WGS 84 UTM 11S, 741786, 3894330N

The proposal is to install a self-rusting, black-pipe, rail fence, 20-30 feet in length. The fence would be installed between boulders to restrict livestock access to the spring. This project would ensure year-round water availability for wildlife, especially bighorn sheep and protect riparian habitat from overuse and trampling by livestock.

This is a low producing spring that is being heavily used by livestock, and sometimes livestock consume more water than the spring can produce. The riparian vegetation is trampled and heavily used.

The spring was developed in 1980 and consists of a natural rock masonry dam that pools water (EA No. AZ-020-9-59), signed 2-23-1979. AGFD holds a Certificated Water Right from ADWR. BLM also has a water filing that is junior to AGFD's filing.

We need to find out where livestock are watering nearby. This is in the Black Mountain allotment. This could be covered by a CX...small exclosure.

Wild Horse and Burro, Chad Benson; Wilderness, M. Driscoll; Range, Karima El-Negery, Wildlife & T&E, Rebecca Peck.